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ABSTRACT

Black and Hispanic youth in Chicago are increasingly attending independent schools in their own neighborhoods. These schools offer students academic preparation within the context of a well-articulated philosophy and/or religious beliefs. In Chicago, there are nearly 50 such institutions, located in the least affluent communities. The average enrollment is 200 students, ranging from as few as 70 to as many as 1,300. Only two of the 50 schools are not State-accredited, and nearly all employ some teachers who have advanced degrees. The greatest reason for the growth of independent neighborhood schools in Chicago is that the environment of public education is regarded as hostile to minority youth. Specifically, Chicago's desegregation efforts are perceived to have failed, and parents desire to see their children in schools that provide better discipline, more individualized attention and more opportunities than public schools. Factors which inhibit the growth of independent schools have included: (1) the public's often-idealized commitment to public education; (2) black middle class flight from inner city neighborhoods; (3) low parental expectations regarding the usefulness of education; (4) the insularity of independent neighborhood schools, which have not often created associations with other independent schools; and (5) economic factors. This report, which includes brief profiles of ten independent schools, presents recommendations for supportive action in the public and private sectors. (KH)

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Access to Quality:
Private Schools in Chicago's Inner City

By Dr. Joan Davis Ratteray

I. Introduction

Inner-city parents all across America are breaking away from large government monopolies in education. This is no less true of Chicago, where thousands of parents are exercising their power of choice in education by sending their children to independent neighborhood schools.

Quality education in the public school system is at a very low level, and negative social factors such as crime are at an all-time high. Minority-group youth, most of whom have limited financial mobility, find themselves locked into public schools with few or no alternatives. Nearly half of them drop out, and most of the remainder graduate with inadequate basic skills. Chicago now stands in danger of creating yet another "lost generation" as more young people are devoured by large bureaucratic structures that have been created for the education of the masses.

Parents from low-income neighborhoods are continually seeking independent schools to help their children survive the schooling process, often doing so under great financial hardship. While there are many influences that tend to hamper the growth of these institutions, the schools continue to thrive.

The national story of independent neighborhood schools was first told by this author in 1984 <1>. The present study examines schools like these in Chicago, based on in-depth interviews conducted in 1986 <2>. Some typical examples of neighborhood schools are described and factors that promote their development are explored. The study also looks at some of the obstacles that have impeded their growth and identifies some directions that future policies in the public and private sectors might take.

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II. A Profile of Independent Schools

African-American and Hispanic youth in Chicago are increasingly attending independent schools in their own neighborhoods. There they become academically prepared and do so frequently in a context that is shaped by a well-articulated cultural philosophy and/or religious beliefs.

There are nearly fifty of these institutions in Chicago, with most of them located in the least affluent communities, such as those on the south and west sides of the city. For example, on the south side, there are pockets of severe poverty surrounded by significant black middle-income populations. It is in these inner enclaves that the majority of south-side independent schools can be found. It is also striking that in the city as a whole, schools that are closest to poor neighborhoods have the highest enrollments, the longest waiting lists, and the greatest need for expanded facilities. On the other hand, schools serving the middle-income population usually have dwindling enrollments and excess capacity.

These schools are the epitome of self-help, entrepreneurship, and innovation. They are also truly independent. Whether secular or religious, they are not usually affiliated with other large organizations. Among the religious schools, for example, they may retain the name of a major Christian denomination or the name of some other religion, and they even rely on some of that group's doctrines or teachings, but they receive little or no direct financial support or curriculum control by that group. The same is true among the secular schools. Most of them have no local, regional, or national group affiliations. Only a very small number are members of the Council of Independent Black Institutions (CIBI), a national organization with a pan-African perspective.

Many schools require placement testing, although there is generally an "open door" policy for enrollment. They will admit children who do not quite meet their standards by giving them the benefit of the doubt, but will work closely with them until they are able to meet those standards.

The average enrollment in these schools is 200 students, ranging from as few as seventy to as many as 1,300. Waiting lists go as high as 1,000 students.

In keeping with their academic mission, nearly all schools employ some teachers who have advanced degrees. Only two are not state-accredited: one is having difficulties with building code regulations and another is awaiting notification of certification. Nearly one-third of the schools are accredited by regional associations as well.

Typical of Chicago's independent neighborhood schools are the following institutions:

- The Howalton School has seventy students, Grades K-8, in a building capable of housing over 200. It is located on East 113th Street. Tuition ranges from $350 to $1,705, with additional income from modest parent fundraising and some foundation support. It is known as the oldest operating minority independent school in the city. It

began by offering tutorial sessions in the summer, and for over forty years it has offered a curriculum in basic education with a significant math component.

- Accounters Preparatory Academy has seventy-eight students, K-8, on Southwest 81st Street. Tuition here is $950. The school is part of Accounters Community Center and receives strong support from its parents, sixty percent of whom are single parents. Accounters believes that parental involvement is very important to the school's program development, and its parents are involved in every aspect of the school, as teachers, administrators, and members of the board of directors.

- Faulkner School serves eighty students, Grades K-8, with a capacity of 200. It is located on South Coles Avenue. The tuition is $2,700, and two annual fundraising campaigns provide additional income to help maintain tuition at this level. Faulkner has a long tradition of strong curricula in mathematics and science, and its students compete in city-wide and state-level competitions. It monitors the students closely, testing them at least three times a year, and has found that the students tend to score at levels that are two or more years above national norms.

- New Concept Development Center on South Cottage Grove has 100 students, K-4. Tuition is $1,500. This school is part of an organizational structure that houses its own publishing company and bookstore, and one-third of the school's operating capital comes from the success of the other two enterprises. The school is a member of CIBI, and a pan-African cultural perspective is emphasized throughout the curriculum.

- Academy of St. James is located on South Phillips Avenue. Its 170 students, Grades 1-12, pay annual tuition of $2,500 to $3,000. It is described as a school guided by Christian principles and a conviction that values in education should nurture a child throughout the school experience.

- Humboldt Christian School on North Humboldt Boulevard enrolls 193 youth, most of them Hispanic, from pre-K through 8. Tuition is $270 per year. Although the school is located on church property, it is operated by parents and financially supported by the community. Profits from a thrift shop, owned by the church and operated by parents and former students, contribute to the economic base of the school and defray some of its costs. Its teachers participate in a salary-sharing program that is maintained by contributions from donors outside the immediate community. In this way, the contributors maintain a personal relationship with the teachers they sponsor and come to learn a great deal about the program. The school has also been responsible for helping at least two other schools get started in other predominantly Hispanic communities.

- Richard P. Hinton Academy on South LaSalle Street serves 234 students from pre-K to 8. Tuition is from $1,300 to $1,600. This

school receives significant financial and in-kind services from the 3,000 members of a Pentecostal church with which it is affiliated. It is located in a building that was renovated after being abandoned by the public school system. Unfortunately, when the public school closed, many of the utilities were so permanently disconnected and uprooted that the cost of reinstalling them became quite significant. An official of this school cites a strong program in phonics as being responsible for keeping its students performing above grade level.

- Northwest Institute has over 300 students, K-8, sixty percent of whom are black, thirty percent Hispanic, and ten percent others. It has an "open door" policy for enrollment but does test for placement and to understand the special educational needs of each child. About seventy percent of its students come from the immediate neighborhood. Tuition here ranges from $900 to $1,700. The school is very proud of its parental alliance organization, as well as the support it has received from the community. It also has a tutoring program that extends to the twelfth grade.

- Providence-St. Mel is a high school on South Central Park Avenue. It has 490 students, with a 100 percent college acceptance rate for its graduates. Tuition is $1,400 per year, some of which is refunded to honor students. This school was discontinued by the Roman Catholic archdiocese but was revived as an independent institution by parents, teachers, students, and friends who participated in a massive fundraising program. As a result, it has become known as "the school that refused to die" and its enrollment has increased by seventy-five percent in the last eight years.

- Holy Angels School has 1,304 students, Grades K-8, located on Oakwood Boulevard. Tuition is from $360 to $420, with some scholarship assistance. The student/teacher ratio is often more than 40:1, but the school maintains student performance on standardized tests within six months of the national norm. The school is within walking distance of five housing projects, and approximately fifty percent of its students come from the immediate neighborhood.

These and many other independent schools demonstrate that they can improve the environment in which many minority and poor children from Chicago's inner city learn. These schools do it more efficiently and at lower cost than public-sector or the more traditional private-sector educational institutions.

III. Factors Promoting Growth of Independent Schools

Independent neighborhood schools continue to emerge because many of the factors that led to the creation of earlier schools still exist today. There is, in essence, an educational environment in Chicago that is hostile to the interests of minority-group youth. Specifically, there is a lack of access to many quality schools that serve the majority population, there is painful irony in some of the effects of desegregation, and parents are actively pursuing classrooms where values are taught.

A. Lack of Access to Quality Education

In earlier years, minorities were simply prohibited from getting an education under the same roof as the majority population. But when minorities did gain access to public schools, the lack of quality instruction was one of the most powerful reasons for starting private schools.

In 1945, three concerned black public school teachers started tutoring sessions. They were so successful with the children that the parents appealed to the teachers to establish an all-day school. Thus, the Howalton School was born. It continues to this day to serve Chicago youth by emphasizing a return to basics, closer teacher-pupil relationships, and the building of character, confidence, pride, and leadership.

Thirty years later, the same thing happened again. Chicago public schools were prohibited from graduating students who could not read at grade level. Private organizations like Accounters Preparatory Academy were set up to offer tutoring sessions. They soon saw no point in re-teaching children to do what the public schools had failed to do in the first place. This tutoring group became a school for full-time students, adding a grade each year.

The dearth of quality education continues today. Two-thirds of Chicago's minority students attend segregated, nonselective high schools, and as many as eighty percent of the seniors in these schools are reading below the national average <3>. The dropout rate in Chicago schools is approximately forty-six percent, but it can reach as high as sixty-two percent in some areas <4>. This decreasing level of education has been found to occur in areas where there is also an increasing cycle of poverty <5>. For example, the number of predominantly black enclaves in the city has grown from thirteen percent of the city's census tracts in 1960 to nearly twenty-five percent in 1970 and more than thirty-three percent in 1980, while racially mixed areas have remained fairly constant. In addition, ten of the sixteen most concentrated areas of poverty in the United States are in Chicago <6>. Many of these poor blacks, by virtue of this poor quality of education, have been effectively precluded from ever enjoying higher-level careers <7>.

B. The Irony of Desegregation

Several years ago, a number of Chicago's public schools were designated "magnet schools" in an attempt to offset the effects of segregation. These schools offer enhanced curricula (some focus on languages, for example, others on overall academic excellence) and are allowed to choose their students from anywhere in the city. However, the magnet school system has resulted in a situation in Chicago that is full of irony, because it now works to the disadvantage of many poor minorities.

In the eyes of the education establishment, magnet programs as they are defined on paper are equitable and the competition is keen for everyone. Reality in the trenches, however, is different. Some families perceive that the concept is unfair. Many poor parents, for example, expected at one time that

magnet schools would provide access to quality education in public schools. For many white students and some middle-class black children, it does. Others have discovered that both desegregation and academic quality are beyond their reach.

Chicago's plan for racial desegregation and the improvement of quality in education actually hinges upon three academic approaches. One involves the creation of magnet schools, another involves magnet programs within neighborhood schools, and the third includes "community academies." The last focus on remedial skills, as well as on reading and math enrichment programs, while only the magnet schools are structurally directed toward consistent overall academic excellence.

Under the court-approved formula used to distribute students among magnet schools in the city, no more than thirty-five percent nor less than fifteen percent of the students in any magnet school should be white, while not more than eighty-five percent nor less than sixty-five percent of the students should be minorities. The allocation for minorities must be divided among African-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, Asian-Americans, and other minorities.

As of 1984, blacks and Hispanics constituted over seventy-four percent of the total student population in Chicago <8>, with minority enrollments expected to have increased since then. However, there are only forty-five magnet schools in the city, serving 30,681 of the 450,000 students. Consequently, a very large number of minorities in poor neighborhoods compete for a small number of seats.

Black children who choose to apply to magnet schools are often denied the available spaces <9>. Most are actually forced to remain in schools catering to remedial programs, rather than those accelerated and challenging programs in magnet schools. Furthermore, most magnet schools are defined as "non-selective." In other words, admission is determined by available space and the race of the applicants, not by the neighborhood in which the school is located. The Allen (1986) article gave examples of poor black children who found they were barred from entrance, and this was further substantiated by the Ratteray (1986) interviews of public school parents. It is because very high-performing and middle-class students are primarily the ones admitted to magnet schools that the selection effectively is based on academic achievement and class, which is not the intent of the program.

Whites, on the other hand, are outnumbered and in great demand <10>. They therefore have greater flexibility in placement, getting prime seats for both their best and their not-so-good students, and are disproportionately favored in the selection process.

The system's unfairness is transparent to many African-American and Hispanic-American parents. Instead of government intervention bringing positive results for their children, it has brought only the pain of lost hope and opportunity.

C. The Pursuit of Values

School administrators report that parents want discipline and a strong sense of values expressed in the education of their children. They also want a safe environment, in light of rising gang violence and other crimes in public schools. These parents believe that the widespread lack of discipline inhibits positive learning. For this reason, they are willing to endure severe economic hardship in order to provide a better chance at learning for their children.

Some parents make it quite plain that they do not seek to replace the government schools. However, they often find that one or more of their children requires a smaller educational setting and more individualized attention. By getting their children on the right track early enough at one of the independent neighborhood schools, they can avoid the horrible alternative-- their child will not be "put out to pasture" in the remedial fields of government schools.

The conditions of Chicago's schools--characterized by low academic performance, a child's disadvantage in belonging to certain racial groups, and the value-less instruction that is typical of public education--have devastated minority-group youth. These young people are actually guaranteed citizenship at the bottom of the ladder in an increasingly technological society. Conditions are ripe for the creation of a new wave of independent neighborhood schools.

IV. Obstacles to Growth of Independent Schools

There are several emotional, economic, and political factors that have inhibited and will continue to inhibit the growth of independent neighborhood schools. These include a commitment to public education, the flight of the black middle class, lowered expectations among the poor, and a lack of alliances among groups in the city.

A. Commitment to Public Education

There is widespread fealty among minority groups and among the majority to a government-sponsored system that is obviously not functioning well. Their unrelenting support seems to be built on a very idealized concept of public education.

These individuals view public schools as the only proper savior of the masses. They perceive any effort to diminish public school resources or take away the "best" students as an attack on the group itself. They also fear that competition from private schools will turn public schools into a "dumping ground." This commitment ignores the reality of Chicago today, where $1.7 billion is spent annually to achieve what are widely accepted as dismal results.

Organizations such as the Chicago Urban League are on record as opposing tuition tax credits and voucher proposals as potentially damaging to the public school system. There is also a wide array of researchers and civic organizations who thrive on studying the disaster of public education <11>, yet they recommend perpetual tinkering that will keep the system going in spite of it-

self. They believe that the system will get better, even though time has shown that it always returns to its prior state and sometimes becomes even more entrenched.

Most public school supporters have a romantic vision of an ideal system of income redistribution that would pay for the education of the masses. It is based on the notion of entitlement, the idea that the poor have a right to the income of the more affluent. In addition, they subscribe to the original reason for which public schools were created, and that is to create "one America" by squeezing everyone into the same cultural mold (one that happens to be Eurocentric), rather than recognizing that America can only be great as a mosiac of distinguishable parts.

Finally, they look at suburban public schools, which are also grossly defective, but far superior to inner-city public schools. Even though the nation is "at risk," the forces mobilized to retain the present concept of public education are very great. After all, suburban communities are so self-contained and so free of significant numbers of minorities that they never need be concerned with the inner city on a day-to-day basis. They can afford their romantic ideals.

B. Black Flight

The black middle class is abandoning its roots, leaving black educational institutions and in some cases moving out of black neighborhoods. This pattern of "black flight" can be seen in the dwindling numbers of students from black middle-income families enrolled in Chicago's independent neighborhood schools. It is supported by statistics on increased enrollment of blacks in magnet schools and in predominantly white private schools. In fact, studies have indicated that total enrollment of white private schools would have been constant were it not for an influx of minority students, both nationally <12> and in Chicago itself <13>.

Research has also shown that this trend among middle-income blacks in Chicago has had a serious effect on the youth themselves: they may feel less "knowledgeable about, and thus less responsible for, the less affluent members of their communities." <14> In other words, black young people enrolled in predominantly white private schools seem unable or unwilling to reach back and help the poor they have left behind.

C. Lowered Expectations

Many parents whose children attend public schools are unable to pursue the idea of private alternatives because they are locked into a sense of hopelessness about their condition. They have, in effect, low expectations about educational institutions in general.

In a 1984 poll, Chicago residents gave inner-city schools a grade of "D-minus" <15>. The view of these inner-city parents contrasted sharply with those of parents in suburban communities or in other parts of the state who gave higher ratings. But it was School Superintendent Manford Byrd, Jr., who

captured the feelings that Chicago's black underclass have about the impact of their education. He said, "There is ample evidence, to some of them at least, that no matter what they do, their lot has been determined." <16>

The Ratteray (1986) interviews of parents whose children attend public schools on Chicago's south side support the pervasive feelings of hopelessness. These parents explained that people become frustrated with their inability to penetrate the system and effect change, finally becoming disillusioned and intimidated by the system. However, this particular group of parents is unique. They are committed to starting their own independent school, which is scheduled to open in the fall of 1986 and will be known as Hope Preparatory Academy.

D. Insularity

The final impediment to growth is insularity, manifested at both the individual level in the schools and in the larger Chicago community.

It was found during the 1986 interviews that administrators in many independent neighborhood schools knew very little about other schools, some of which were in the same section of the city; each was preoccupied with the survival of his or her own school. The same thing was found in the earlier Ratteray study to be true for schools located in other cities. The schools have not developed their own local or regional associations for mutual support or political action, and they have not been active members of the Illinois Advisory Committee for Non-Public Schools. They have eschewed collective activities and devoted themselves instead to teaching children. In a sense, their insularity may be one of the reasons for their academic success.

Another aspect of the problem can be seen in the structure of some of the schools. Although they continue to thrive, they are frequently built around the strong personalities of individual principals or founders. They do not seem to be building institutions designed to outlive the individuals who created them. Institution-building, of course, requires schools to have access to resources, including funding, space, materials, teachers, and management expertise. Yet, in many instances, parents can provide no further help. Even though tuition is very low when compared to other private schools, the population these schools serve has a finite capacity for economic sacrifice. They also have a limited amount of time to devote to such time-consuming activities as fundraising.

In the wider political spectrum, Chicago communities are artificially separated from one another. Even though there are issues where different groups have much in common, they are forever kept apart by traditional Chicago politics and racial animosity. Examples of barriers to communication can be seen in the hundreds of reports that have appeared in the national media about friction between the administration of Mayor Harold Washington and traditional power brokers.

In the Ratteray interviews, both black parents and some white ethnic group representatives separately agreed that tuition vouchers would help each of them in seeking educational choice. The chances of their working together, however, are almost zero. There is a similar division over the issue of having an

elected school board <17>, a concept that would benefit both sides of the city's cultural divide.

Economic factors are also very powerful. Many jobs for minorities are tied to the vast education bureaucracy. The 1985-86 budget for the Chicago school system indicated that seventy-four percent of the $1.8 billion budget provided salaries, pensions, and benefits to over 41,000 employees in the system, half of whom are teachers and other "student contact" personnel <18>. As of the 1980 census, at least half of the teachers were blacks, not counting the other support staff. It is fair to say that the need for job security may have numbed a great many sensitive people who otherwise might take steps to effect changes in the system.

These obstacles to breaking away from the public system form a complex web of rejection that is emotional, political, and economic. Sometimes the reasons can stand alone, while others are structures embedded within structures. Individuals, in order to survive, surround themselves with these obstacles like hard shells, but in the process they become impervious to change.

Lay individuals and professionals are equally responsible for the disaster of public-sector education and the failure to move resolutely toward private alternatives. Here, the words of William Simon are especially poignant. He was writing generally about business leaders who failed to halt the growth of government when they had the opportunity, but his comments apply also to professionals who acquiesce in total government sponsorship of education. Simon wrote that in some instances, they

> ...simply do not realize the danger. In others, they may recognize it, but perhaps are uncertain what to do. Or they know what they ought to do but are fearful of taking on the adversary. Finally, in some cases, it is simply a matter of having chosen to take the easy way out, the popular road, the trendy stance. <19>

Thus, the story of education in Chicago is one of confused loyalties, of changing loyalties, and even of no loyalties. The battle lines are drawn, and the children suffer.

V. A Curtain of Silence

The private sector seems to be standing to one side, unaware that independent neighborhood schools exist in Chicago. Only a few have been willing to pierce the layers of neglect that smother education in the inner city.

On the other side of this curtain, the schools are equally silent, not reaching out to the private sector as much as they should. Although there are many reasons for this, two are most important. First, the principals and founders of these schools have little time to promote their institutions in personal visits to businesses or foundations; and second, they do not have the funds required for effective direct mail campaigns. Articles about the schools have appeared occasionally in newspapers that serve primarily the black community, but the schools are seldom mentioned in the other media.

Most business support for education appears to come in the form of scholarships and other aid to higher education, as well as the nationally recognized adopt-a-school program in public institutions. Chicago businesses also support the more elite private schools, both within and outside Illinois.

Minority-owned businesses, in addition, have a cultural self-interest in promoting academic excellence among inner-city youth. Yet, there appears to be little support by these firms for independent neighborhood schools that serve black and Hispanic youth.

The private sector as a whole would seem to be the most likely ally for independent schools, promoting the entrepreneurial leadership of the schools' founders, financially supporting the exploration of free-market ideals, and recognizing the necessity for mutual support of a healthy economy in the future.

Because these schools are practically invisible, the private sector does not learn about the positive things the young people are doing and the extent of their academic achievement. The private sector assumes that nothing is happening. Carried one step further, it then becomes easy to assume that nothing positive could happen, and the cycle of neglect is more firmly entrenched.

VI. Conclusion

In an environment where inner-city schools foster high dropout rates, student disillusionment, a lack of motivation, student violence, and ubiquitous vandalism, Chicago's independent neighborhood schools still flourish. They challenge the public and minorities themselves to have higher expectations for student performance. They have made access to quality education a reality for many families with low-to-modest incomes, supplementing it with a cultural or religious context that gives meaning to the acquisition of knowledge.

These schools exist in spite of the fact that the public at large has a blind allegiance to government-sponsored education, in spite of a trend where black middle-income families are hitching their futures to a different wagon, and in spite of the tragedy that many poor parents are not even aware that there is a way out for them.

To a certain extent, however, being isolated has been an asset for the schools. Not only are they isolated from the turmoil of the public sector, but struggling against the odds has strengthened the resolve of their teachers and administrators. But this does not negate the fact that they usually lack financial, technical, and moral support from the private sector.

The story of independent neighborhood schools in Chicago highlights the need for new policies in both the public and private sectors--policies that are based on a new vision of inner-city education. Such policies should encourage self-help and entrepreneurship in education, developing a total educational system that respects the flexibility, diversity, and academic excellence that can be found in a free-market environment.

The public sector would benefit from considering the following approaches to education:

- expand the practice of contracting with independent schools to offer programs in basic skills, because the smaller administrative units of independent schools can offer more individualized attention to children who would lag behind in a larger system;

- begin marketing public school buildings that are scheduled to be abandoned, and do it early enough so that the structures do not deteriorate beyond reasonable repair and before the utilities are permanently detached; and

- establish education "free zones," where local businesses are rewarded through tax deductions with reasonable ceilings when they provide financial or in-kind support to inner-city schools located in selected economically disadvantaged areas.

The private sector, above all, can have a positive and immediate impact on strengthening independent neighborhood schools by relying on the following approaches:

- contribute directly to schools for such purposes as building funds, scholarships, curriculum materials, libraries, teachers' salaries, or plant maintenance;

- offer technical assistance, especially from firms employing such professionals as engineers, accountants, writers, and others, releasing them on salary during working hours to assist in school management or academic programs and, equally important, to serve as role models and stimulate interest in specific careers; and

- support private organizations created to assist the development of these schools, generate public support for them, and increase communication among the schools.

In addition to general private-sector support, there is specific need for minority-owned businesses in Chicago to rally behind independent neighborhood schools. Those who support only government institutions are in fact participating in the decimation of future resources in their communities.

By teaching children in Chicago's inner city, independent neighborhood schools are doing their part, and have been doing it for a long time. It is now up to others in the community to do what many of the schools are not able to do--raise additional funds, make the schools more visible in their own communities, keep them informed of the latest developments in teaching strategies and materials, and put them in touch with one another.

One thing is certain. The inability of government schools to rescue young Black minds in Chicago's inner city is a problem of enormous proportions. The possibility of permanently reforming inner-city public schools is remote, and many feel that any improvements can only be marginal. Therefore, the intellectual carnage of minority communities at taxpayers' expense will continue. The

only reasonable alternative is to promote independent neighborhood schools.

If the public and private sectors take advantage of these opportunities to reinforce independent neighborhood schools, these institutions can demonstrate how effective their programs are in the community. Although independent schools tend to be small, many of them can serve as models for public schools. Putting money behind programs that work, as well as assisting young people early enough in their lives to make a difference, can help to create a more positive social environment and a more viable free market in the future.

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